

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Process for the hydrogenation of a polymer composed of conjugated diene monomer units and a nitrile group-containing monomer units, ~~in which comprises carrying out the hydrogenation is carried out~~ in the presence of hydrazine, ~~and an oxidizing compound, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of an antioxidant comprising more than 6 carbon atoms and chosen from a derivative of a substituted aromatic alcohol, of dihydroquinoline, of benzimidazole or of an aromatic secondary amine and a compound which contains an element from group 13 of the periodic system as catalyst, whereby and wherein~~ the antioxidant is added to the polymer prior to hydrogenation, ~~with the use of NBR that is polymerized in the presence of an antidegradant being excluded.~~

2. (Currently amended) Process according to claim 1, wherein ~~NBR~~ nitrile-butadiene rubber is used as the polymer.

3. (Currently Amended) Process according to claim 1, wherein the antioxidant ~~aromatic secondary amine derivative~~ is a p-phenylenediamine derivative.

4. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein N-isopropyl-N'-phenyl-p-phenylenediamine is used as antioxidant.

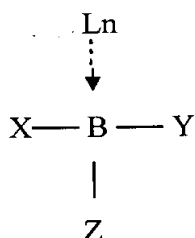
5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of hydrazine compound/double bonds is between 0.9/1 and 2/1.

8. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of oxidizing compound/double bonds is between 0.9/1 and 2/1.

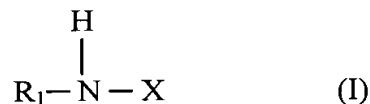
- B2*
9. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein the oxidizing compound is added to the reaction mixture after hydrazine.
10. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is present in the latex form.
11. (Original) Process according to claim 1, wherein the oxidizing compound is hydrogen peroxide.
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12. (New) Process according to claim 1, wherein the catalyst is a boron-containing compound.
- B3*
13. (New) Process according to claim 12, wherein the boron-containing compound is a compound of formula



where X, Y and Z, are, independently, R, OR, OOR, NR<sub>2</sub>, SR, PR<sub>2</sub>, OC(=O)R or halogen atom, where R represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl, aryl or cycloalkyl group having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a hydrocarbon group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms and a heteroatom from groups 14, 15, 16 or 17 of the periodic table of the elements; L is an electron-donating ligand and n = 0 or 1.

14. (New) Process according to claim 12, wherein the boron-containing compound is a borate or a peroxyborate.
15. (New) Process according to claim 12, wherein the boron-containing compound is boric acid.

16. (New) Process according to claim 1, further comprising adding a compound of formula I to the hydrogenated polymer:

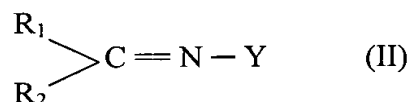


13 where R<sub>1</sub> represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms; and

X represents -R<sub>3</sub>, -OR<sub>4</sub>, -SR<sub>4</sub> or -NR<sub>5</sub>R<sub>6</sub>,

where R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, and R<sub>5</sub>, independently, represent a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms, and R<sub>6</sub> represents an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms.

17. (New) Process according to claim 1, further comprising adding a compound of formula II before, during or after the hydrogenation:



where R<sub>1</sub> represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms;

R<sub>2</sub> represents an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms, and

Y represents -R<sub>7</sub>, -OR<sub>8</sub>, -SR<sub>8</sub>, -NR<sub>9</sub>R<sub>10</sub> or -N=CR<sub>11</sub>R<sub>12</sub>,

where R<sub>7</sub>, R<sub>8</sub>, R<sub>9</sub>, R<sub>10</sub>, R<sub>11</sub> and R<sub>12</sub>, independently, represent a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or cycloalkyl group with from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group with 6 to 30 carbon atoms, and wherein, any of R<sub>3</sub> to R<sub>12</sub> may contain one or more heteroatoms from groups 13, 14, 15, 16 or 17 of the periodic table of the elements.

18. (New) Process according to claim 2, wherein the nitrile-butadiene rubber is one which was prepared in the absence of a polymerizable antidegradant.